Thought Process for On-Call Rotation in PagerDuty

# Objective

To ensure 24/7 reliable incident response by setting up an efficient on-call rotation in PagerDuty that balances alert responsibility across team members, avoids burnout, and guarantees that no critical alert goes unattended.

# Thought Process Behind On-Call Rotation Setup

## 1. Understanding the Team Structure and Availability

- Identify available responders who are capable of addressing incidents.  
- Collect availability preferences (time zones, working hours, etc.).  
- Ensure complete 24/7 coverage, including off-hours and weekends.

## 2. Define the Rotation Policy

- Decide on a fair and manageable rotation model (e.g., weekly, daily).  
- Minimize context switching and avoid burnout.  
- Plan around holidays and leave schedules.

## 3. Create a PagerDuty Schedule

- Use PagerDuty’s schedule feature to automate who is on-call.  
- Add responders and define layers for primary and backup.  
- Customize shift times to match team availability.

## 4. Set Up Escalation Policies

- Create escalation rules to notify backup users if the primary doesn’t respond.  
- Use appropriate wait times (e.g., escalate after 10–15 minutes).  
- Add final escalation to a lead or manager for unacknowledged incidents.

## 5. Account for Notifications and Responsiveness

- Ensure all users have multi-channel notification rules (push, SMS, email).  
- Encourage installation of the PagerDuty mobile app.  
- Perform test alerts regularly to verify setup.

## 6. Review and Iterate

- Monitor incident metrics and response times.  
- Gather feedback from the team.  
- Adjust schedules and escalation policies as needed.

# Key Principles Followed

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| Principle | Description |
| Fairness | On-call duty is evenly distributed among team members. |
| Reliability | Always ensures someone is available to respond. |
| Redundancy | Escalations ensure alerts are never missed. |
| Simplicity | Easy to manage, modify, and scale. |
| Resilience | Handles exceptions like holidays or unavailability. |

# Example On-Call Rotation Plan (Weekly)

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Week | On-Call User | Backup User |
| 1 | Alice | Bob |
| 2 | Bob | Charlie |
| 3 | Charlie | Alice |